

This Body Which is (Not) Mine: Blackness, Gender, and the Antagonism of Embodiment

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“Mon ultime prière: Ô mon corps, fais de moi toujours un homme qui interroge!
[My ultimate prayer: Oh my body, make of me always a man who questions!]”

—Frantz Fanon

Can the Black manifest itself¹ or make itself *appear* in and through Gender? Is the Gendered body that the Black ontologically manifests as its *own body (corps)*, its own self (*soi-même*), or is it rather a “ruse of embodiment”? This is a complex question which requires an analysis of the psychoanalytic vicissitudes and reversals of Black desire, embodiment, identification, and (mis)recognition. I aim to establish that a fundamental ontologico-psychic antagonism exists between the Black and Gender, in the dimension of the lived experience of embodiment. This “psyche-soma”² of Gender does not belong to the Black, but is an imposition of the (White) Human Unconscious. Because this question is so bound up with identity, I begin with the question of what the Black considers itself to be, first and foremost, and how this experience *could* unfold, so that the Black might understand its Gender as a mask. For that reason, this investigation should be read as if it were a psychoanalytic encounter, or the unraveling of a dialectical process between Blackness and Gender in which subsequent realizations retroactively sublimate previous ones until sublimation is no longer possible and the pure negation (of Gender) remains the only option.

On the Fundamental Antagonism Between Blackness and Gender

I. Black Experience and the Problem of Masked-Méconnaissance

What is Black experience? Frank Wilderson III obliquely approaches this question by asserting a fundamental antagonism between the (White) Human and Blackness, for “whereas Humans exist on some plane of being and thus can become existentially present through some struggle for, of, or through recognition, Blacks cannot reach this plane.”³ The antagonism is of two conflicting *ontological structures*. This is because “for the Black, freedom is an ontological, rather than *experiential*, question (my italics).”⁴ Why ontological rather than experiential?

Wilderson's point is that the perception of freedom for the Black is in fact a *méconnaissance* of the ontological structure of the (White) Human, which is itself, *enslaving*. The notion of *méconnaissance* (or misrecognition) is intimately tied to Lacan's articulation of the "mirror stage" in the which the previously fragmented body of the child libidinally invests in, or "assumes [*assume*] an image"⁵, or *imago*, of the "total form of his body"⁶, which, however, only exists on the level of the Imaginary as "gestalt" or "ego-ideal." While the identification of the fragmented body of the child as *bodily-imago* allows for the coming into existence of the "specular I" or ego, *méconnaissance* is in fact the "fundamental function of the ego"⁷ insofar as it denotes the inability of the Subject to recognize Symbolic or intersubjectively structured reality in favor of the Imaginary. The Black's perception (of freedom) is therefore symptomatic of *méconnaissance* insofar as it is a failure to recognize the *ontological structure* of the (White) Human.

Jared Sexton makes this point salient in his analysis of the abolition of slavery during the Reconstruction era. Drawing on the work of legal scholars Guyora Binder and Anthony Farley, Sexton argues that the Thirteenth Amendment, which intended to abolish slavery, instead functioned *de jure* as a manumitting⁸ of slaves, "redistribut[ing] the resources and power of the masters"⁹ to the legal domain and *displacing* the experience of the slave into the reification of *a structuring lack* in the letter of American law. It would be a mistake to focus on individual perceptions of freed slaves, for the law engenders the promise of freedom in such a way that the promise exists only *as promise*. *Méconnaissance* occurs on the level of the Imaginary when the tautological dimension of the promise is (mis)perceived as freedom. Apropos of the putative freedom of Blacks during and after Reconstruction, it is impossible for the Black to recognize this *méconnaissance* as symptom of *méconnaissance*, allowing the law to be revealed only as promise. This is because the misrecognition of the promise for the fulfillment of freedom is *immanent to the law itself*. The law undoes itself in its Symbolic capacity. In order to reveal *méconnaissance* as symptom there must exist a mediating Symbolic domain via which this misrecognition can become aware of itself in the Real. But because the Symbolic domain embodies this misrecognition, Black *méconnaissance* becomes a symptom, which, as David Marriott brilliantly argues, is *masked* as symptom, because it is the structure or the "group itself [that functions] as symptom."¹⁰ Instead of freedom, it is the "perfection of slavery [which] issues forth" from the desire of this promise, "*the slave's desire for equality itself*."¹¹

Under such conditions it is the Black's "self-assurance"¹² of freedom that takes the form of the fantasy of a desire that is without lack, or more precisely (in the case of the Black, rather than Human) the fantasy of a desire which is not enslaved. Since this fantasy is masked by an inability to realize itself as symptom it is a fantasy which "fugues" the "structure of the real": "thus it is that fantasy at once performs and masks itself."¹³ This gives way to the dimension of "real fantasy"¹⁴ casting a shadow over structuring enforcement of social death in the "afterlife of

slavery.”¹⁵ Freedom is an ontological question because in the absence of a mediating (Black) Symbolic structure that would allow Black experience and desire to recognize themselves as *méconnaissance*, the ontology and psyche of the (White) Human imposes itself as non-mediated “real fantasy.” Black experience is not only *a priori* unable to distinguish itself from Whiteness, but also unable to realize that in its dimension of masked-*méconnaissance* it is an *attachment or identification*¹⁶ to an Anti-Black ontology embodied as the World. Let us call this masked misrecognition-cum-identification that the Black undergoes with the World the condition of “*Black Psychosis*,” understood in an absolutely non-pejorative sense¹⁷, but rather as imprisonment in the (White) Human Unconscious.

II. (En)Gendering *Méconnaissance*

Under the concept of “Black Psychosis” I have so far argued that Black experience and desire (for freedom) is intrinsically a masked-*méconnaissance* of Whiteness. The Black is thus “wishfully, unconsciously-already a slave to the *imago* of whiteness” and “this pervertibility is the condition (to be violently affirmed) of what it means to be a black subject.”¹⁸ I will show that through this White *imago* Black *méconnaissance* embodies itself in and through *White Gender*¹⁹ via an analysis of C. Riley Snorton’s *Black on Both Sides*, where he addresses the issues of Blackness and “trans” as ontological logics.

Snorton presents this logic in his analysis of the fugitive slave couple Ellen and William Craft, who escaped from their respective slave plantations in 1848 by disguising themselves as a male disabled White planter and his slave, respectively. Because Ellen’s complexion was “near white” the color difference between her and William “necessitat[ed] Ellen’s gender transformation [into a White male planter] so that the Crafts could travel together homosocially, as was mandated by a legal and social invective against interracial heterosociality-particularly for white mistresses-within slavery’s sexual-cum-racial logics.”²⁰ For Snorton this embodied “passing” exhibits how Blackness operates “in apposition” to “trans” which he resists nominalizing “as a category of gender.”²¹ Rather he defines “trans” and Blackness through the heuristic of transitivity as “the condition for what becomes known as *the human*” or that which “articulates ‘the quality of passing into another condition.’”²² The case of the Crafts illustrates this logic insofar as Ellen’s “cross-gendering” expresses a mode of escape by “passing into another condition” which Snorton sees as a mode of Black fugitivity.

Does not the “passing” that occurs here, however, depend upon Black psychosis? Ellen and William’s “passing” took the form of a White slave owner and his slave so that this “passing” from the condition of slavery into the “human” reiterated the condition of social death. One might direct attention to Ellen’s cross-gendering which allowed her and William to “pass” as free. This “homosocial” passing against prohibited “interracial heterosociality,” however is a *permitted transgression*, one

that takes for granted or introjects the (White) Human taboo of interracial heterosociality as the condition of possibility for “passing.” If we pay attention to the more fundamental issue of how two Blacks “passed” by means of Gender, then the very logic of “passing,” which Snorton articulates both as “trans” and “Blackness,” reveals how the Black embodies its own *imago as Gendered* reflected back to it in the White gaze. Passing as White is always-already what Blacks do insofar as Black experience is a misrecognition of how Blackness is made to be White, and the mask of Gender is a “real fantasy” which represses realizing *méconnaissance* as symptom. The Crafts’ could never have “passed” as *themselves, as Black*, regardless of heterosocial or homosocial norms. In such a way, Snorton misrecognizes or confuses Black ontology (and “black freedom”²³) by reducing the former to a White Gendered ontology.

Snorton critiques Wilderson’s assertion that there is “no philosophically credible way to an experiential, contingent, rider onto the notion of freedom when one considers the Black-such as freedom from gender or economic oppression”²⁴ in the context of this case as a “refusal of the ways gender is itself a racial arrangement that expresses the transubstantiation of things.”²⁵ However, Snorton engages in a more basic refusal, which is how Blackness masks itself in the *imago* of (White) *gendered arrangement*. The dispossession of the Black body comes *from Gender* insofar as the latter imposes the structure of the (White) Human Unconscious. Gender is quite simply how the Black masks its *méconnaissance* (to itself!) by manifesting itself in the embodiment of gendered flesh.²⁶ What Snorton’s analysis of Black ontology *as White Gender* allows us to see is how Gender becomes the libidinally ca-thected displacement of “the question that rests upon” Black ontology, “black freedom.” Gender is how the Crafts’ became free.

III. *Ontological Defense and the Objet petit a of the Black Unconscious*

Up to this point I have argued that Black experience is fundamentally a masked-*méconnaissance* and that this misrecognition *becomes* mask in Gendered embodiment. In this section I will establish that there exists a fundamental antagonism between Blackness and Gender in both an ontological and political sense by grounding this antagonism in the individual Black’s embodiment. This embodiment is first revealed as a *psychic conflict*, in which the Black utilizes the mechanism of defense to disavow the dimension of the Black Unconscious. The resolution occurs by a “spontaneous decision” of the Black Unconscious that it must separate itself from its identification with Gender. Gender then is only realized the *objet petit a* of the Black drive [*Trieb*], giving way to a *psychic antagonism*.

In “Calling into Being: Tranifestation, Black Trans, and the Problem of Ontology,” Calvin Warren takes up Jean-Luc Nancy’s suggestion that “ontology is a phonology” and argues that “the law of being calls, or summons, the place of *Dasein*.”²⁷ Manifestation designates a successful “call into being” because

The place of manifestation is this very thereness for the self. We might think of gender, then, as a particular metaphysical coordinate along an onto-metaphysical plane, which provides an intelligible place for the self.²⁸

However, since the Black lacks “ontological resistance”²⁹ it can never manifest itself in a constitutively Anti-Black World and so attests to “an unsuccessful call-an appeal to being that is ultimately rejected.”³⁰ The Black “does not inhabit the world as a self but as a thing”³¹ and yet in such a manner that it is an “experiencing thing”³² which can experience a Gendered self while being unable to manifest itself as Gendered.

What is this (Gendered) self that the Black experiences while being unable to experience it(self) *as self*? This experience of (non-)experience is what I’ve articulated as Gender insofar as it is a “real fantasy.” One must understand Gender in the dimension of “real fantasy” as a determinate, yet phantasmatic, predication that is able to manifest in the “onto-metaphysical plane.” The various “genderings” of Blackness, conceived in terms of the displacement of the experience of freedom to the realm of Gender, are *physical embodiments* of Black misrecognition. In this way, Gender “is a cloak, an ontic garment” which “do[es] not fit”³³ Blacks. Gender is an accoutrement that covers up naked Black *flesh*, but which the Black (mis)recognizes as the Black *body*. Gender is the White mask the Black skin wears, the direct embodiment of its *méconnaissance*. The Black wears or performs its *méconnaissance* on the surface, in plain sight, all the better to mask the symptom of a Blackness that is-not.

In the Black’s complete identification with this Gender as accoutrement, a psychic conflict arises, since the Black thinks it can manifest on the ontological plane, able to have a *self*. Paradoxically, the Black engages in a mechanism of defense and disavowal of its Blackness through asserting itself as Gender. Freud argues that we know something is repressed when it “can make its way into consciousness on condition that it is *denied*.”³⁴ He gives the following example of a patient’s denial: “You ask who this person in the dream can have been. It was *not* my mother.” However, “we emend this: so it *was* his mother.”³⁵ In contradistinction, the Black communicates its denial by an affirmation of the denied content or image: “I am my Gender.” Language becomes psychotic. This instance of Black disavowal would already be a radical reversal of the psychoanalytic experience, substituting an active affirmation of the denied or repressed content (Gender) for denial or repression of the passively affirmed (insofar as it appears in consciousness). However, this disavowal does not simply function on the level of speech implying the presence of the Other, whether external or internalized. Because the Black lives this *méconnaissance* on the surface as Gender, it literally *embodies* its disavowal. Its disavowal is its (Gendered) body, and its body is its disavowal. *Gender as a disavowal of Blackness*.

Marriott’s notion of “real fantasy” can therefore be understood as the imposed conflation of the Lacanian Imaginary qua mirror stage and Symbolic reality

onto the Black by the (White) Human Unconscious, in which Gender appears as the “total form of [the Black’s] body” that is nevertheless real. For, how does one *negate* a disavowal, that, because embodied, *manifests* or *appears* “by itself” as it were, without having ever entered into the mechanisms of the Black psyche insofar as the latter is considered something internal? This is how we must understand Fanon’s experience of the crumbling of his “corporeal schema” being replaced by “a racial epidermal schema”³⁶ when the little French boy cries “Look, a Negro!” This racial epidermal schema is nothing other than the full imposition of the (White) Human Unconscious as ontological structure onto the Black flesh, insofar as the latter becomes a (White) Gendered body. The (White) Human Unconscious is lived wholly on the Black’s skin, as a sedimentation that it misrecognizes as its Gendered (self). In truth then, the Black’s psyche insofar as it is considered “internal” has never been analyzed.

The resolution cannot occur from the outside but from within, from the Black Unconscious of which we have no knowledge of its functioning. Since we are in a dimension of absolute non-knowledge, of a radical passivity that can only bring itself into existence via a radical affirmation of invention, this resolution can only be spontaneous decision, which must immediately be qualified as Marriott argues, as “radical indecision whose emergence introduces something entirely new into the world.”³⁷ Such a decision that is indecision takes the following form: The Black must break its identification with Gender completely, absolutely separate³⁸ from what it perceives as its body, realizing that this body is a mask which imprisons it, giving way to a fundamental *psychic antagonism* which can never be allayed in which the Black individual lives everyday seeking to utterly negate its Gendered body, which it now experiences as affliction or burden. Insofar as the Black must *partially* manifest ontologically, however, while recognizing that this Gendered appearance is *not it*, it must engage in a *compromise-formation*³⁹ where it no longer takes Gender as natural given⁴⁰ from the side of the (White) Human Unconscious, but rather as partial object of the Black drive [*Trieb*], as what Lacan designates by the *objet petit a*.⁴¹ By separating itself from its conflation with Gender, and constituting the latter as *objet petit a*, the Black drive enacts the mediating function which allows it to see Gender as completely and utterly Other from itself, coming from the side of the World, and not of immanence. In claiming that the Black must realize Gender as contingent and not a natural given, I am most certainly not advocating for a classic performative theory of Gender. Whereas such a theory purports to undermine the fiction of an “identity” that precedes repetitive Gender performance positing “identity as a normative ideal”⁴² that is constantly deferred, the point here is that the Black has neither Gender nor “identity” at all. They are imposed as burdens, and are simply descriptors of the wrong kind. If there is anything like a deferred normative ideal here, it is that of the day in which Gender can finally be negated in its entirety by the Black, without sublation. The compromise-formation can therefore only exist as psychic antagonism, since the Black will experience Gender as the

imposition of an Other-Wordly authority, as ontological superego or Master, which the Black is constantly trying to kill. This body, which the Black experiences as its own, does not belong to it. The Black thus gives way to *two bodies*, one being the Gendered body that it is not, and the other being the *flesh*, that “zero-degree of social conceptualization.”⁴³ The Black Unconscious⁴⁴ is therefore this “*body*” which *has been lost, or stolen*, the dimension of the flesh.⁴⁵

Fanon’s (White) Penis

When one reads this passage a dozen times and lets oneself go—that is when one abandons oneself to the movement of its images—one no longer perceives the Negro but a member (limb); the Negro is eclipsed. He is made member (limb). He is penis.

—Frantz Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs*,
p. 137, my translation.

Having established the fundamental antagonism between Blackness and Gender, we are able to see the confrontation between the Black Unconscious and the (White) Human Unconscious *as such*, incarnated in the Black’s *pénis*. I have amended both the Markmann and Philcox translations⁴⁶ of this excerpt from Fanon’s *Peau noire, masques blancs* to capture the manner in which the Black man is mutilated in his *imago*, the *pénis*. The last two sentences in the original French read: “Il est fait membre. Il *est* pénis”.⁴⁷ The Black *is made or turned*, in the present perfect, denoting an action that is past *and* still constantly occurring in the “afterlife of slavery,” into a determinate *partial object*, an organic member or limb, which the Black identifies with. The second sentence is odd, for it lacks an article in front of the French *pénis*.⁴⁸ Based on my translation, I assert that the Black is not *this or that* particular *pénis*, but *pénis* as ontological predication. This *pénis* is not to be confused with the “*phallus*”, which is a representation of a (typically erect) penis, indicating male virility, or the psychoanalytic concept of the “phallic function”⁴⁹, Since *pénis* here is most definitively anatomical organ, what would it mean to speak of a “*pénis* function”? The (White) Human Unconscious ontologically imposes the *imago* of the *pénis* in such a way that it constitutes a “real fantasy.” *Both* the Black and the (White) Human *see* the Black as *pénis*, since this *imago* is taken as *real*. This “seeing” of the Black as *pénis* should be taken literally since, riding on Warren’s argument, the Black can only *manifest* in the ontological plane as *pénis*. Insofar, as sight is an ontological function this is all one can cognize of the Black. Fanon’s penis is White.

Almost immediately after the quoted excerpt in *Peau noire, masques blancs*, Fanon addresses the issue of anatomy in regard to the Black’s *pénis*:

The average length of the penis among the black men of Africa, Dr. Pales says, rarely exceeds 120 millimeters (4.6244 inches). Testut, in his *Traité d’anatomie*, offers the same figure for the European. But these are facts that persuade no one.⁵⁰

These anatomical facts persuade “no one” (neither the Black nor White), because the *pénis* is imposed on the Black as real *imago*, as anatomical appendage. This is due to the fact that the imposition of the structure of the (White) Human Unconscious onto the Black partakes of a tautological quality or the character “of a timeless enunciation: ‘that’s the way they are.’”⁵¹ The *pénis* appears as timeless enunciation because the White enacts its own ontologically temporal schema onto the Black so that it situates a “loss of animation” in the “imaginary representations of *what is missing or visibly absent* from others.”⁵² The *pénis* appears quite literally as rigid, erect, fixated and timeless because the White imposes onto the Black “a rigidity of thought”⁵³, in which the Black loses all capacity of animation and proprioception. The Black experiences its Gendered body as it(self) because the (White) Human Unconscious imposes this Gendering in such a way that it is *anatomical*, for how could the Black deny this rigidity which immanently emerges from its *corpus*, the *pénis*? And how could the Black not consider anatomy to be it(self)? The (White) Human Unconscious *projects* onto the Black a Gender, (necessarily contingent) that becomes *rigid*, a “*gendered anatomy*”⁵⁴. The Black’s *pénis*, is, in its anatomical dimension, purely contingent as anatomy.

In Fanon’s psychiatric dissertation, which we know he was writing at the same time as *Peau noire, masques blancs*,⁵⁵ he was concerned with establishing the irreducibility of the mental to the biological (specifically neurological). In the analysis of a case of a child patient with Roussy-Levy Syndrome, Fanon notes that the boy exhibited a muscular impairment which affected his personality. The boy says:

Whenever I walk for a period of time, I’m forced to stop myself because it seems to me that it is not I who walks. I do not feel that my legs walk by own desire; I do not move; I am transported as if I were in a car. I do not feel my personality.⁵⁶

The boy feels as though he does not walk through his own desire. He does not walk, *he is walked* in the passive, experiencing himself in the third person, as if some unknown force were walking him. Due to this proprioceptive difficulty, Fanon says that the “result is a declining of the notion of the ego and the personality.”⁵⁷ Because of proprioceptive constraints, the self is limited and diminished. Of the reason for this, Fanon says, “the sane man is a social man. This means to say again, psychologically, that the measure of a sane man is more or less perfect integration into the *socius*.”⁵⁸ This emphasis on the *socius* echoes Fanon’s insistence on *sociogeny*⁵⁹ in *Peau noire, masques blancs*. We must read the issue of the Black’s *pénis* in analogy to this. The ontological infliction of the *pénis* is an anatomical limiting of the Black’s proprioception, and thus a sociogenic imposition. It is not so much, therefore, that the Black “is penis” as much as he *is pénised*, passively by some Other controlling it (“...It was no longer a question of being aware of my body in the third person but in a triple person”⁶⁰). This anatomical proprioceptive constraint limits the Black’s integration into the *socius*, for the Black is *only a pénis*.

This proprioceptive constraint or the inability of integration into the *socius* because of an imposition of an anatomical organ cuts to the heart of issues surrounding Trans and Black Trans studies. (White) cis-gendered or queer individuals are able to express their desires (what one wants) *within* the anatomical bodies they are given and are in identification (who one wants to be, and be seen as)⁶¹ with, having access to the “illusory mastery”⁶² (identification) over their gendered *imago* that is constitutive of the mirror stage. In the case of trans individuals, however, as Patricia Gherovici notes, “sexual identity issues revolve around a particular body, a body one is not born into, one that one becomes.”⁶³ Psychoanalytically speaking⁶⁴ then, the trans individual does not experience the necessary “illusory mastery” over their anatomical body which is equivalent to saying that trans individuals are not able to express their desires or inhabit their mode of *jouissance*⁶⁵ within the gender, or anatomical body, they are given. There exists a leveled down antagonism between *desire* and *identification*, which can be resolved dialectically when the trans individual alters their anatomical body (what one identifies with) in order to enjoy their mode of *jouissance* (desire) since the latter “seeks a place to be inscribed, which is the body.”⁶⁶

For the (White) trans individual, anatomy becomes gendered performance or a *means* to achieve their *jouissance* and moreover is indicative of the fact that this performance of “gender does not transparently denote [its] desiring position.”⁶⁷ My lowercasing of “Gender” in the case of (White) trans, connotes then the fact that “gender” and “desire” are *not identical*, and that the anatomical body, or gender, must be brought “into closer alignment with one’s own desire.”⁶⁸ As Jordan Oserman argues, on the level of *desire* or *jouissance*, the (White) trans individual is still determined by sexual difference because it “concerns the desiring position one adopts in relation to castration, to the phallus”⁶⁹ as signifier and allows for an *increased proprioception in the socius*. This is particularly instructive for the case of the Black and Black trans because my persistent uppercasing of “Gender” in reference to Blackness is indicative of the fact that desire and identification (gender in lowercase) are *made to be identical* under the ontological structure of the (White) Human Unconscious. Thus, the Black trans individual cannot but utterly identify with (its) Gender⁷⁰ which is symptomatic of the fact that the Black both wants to *be* and to *have* Whiteness. Paradoxically, in the case of Black trans, or when Blackness is “grafted onto” trans, it “covertly reifies the aforementioned binaries”⁷¹ (gendered anatomy and identification), which were in antagonism in the case of (White) trans, making them more *securely seen and experienced as natural*. This naturalization of the antagonism inherent in trans is nowhere better evidenced than in Fanon’s (White) *pénis*. Fanon’s *pénis* is but an always-already performed ontological anatomical surgery by the (White) Human Unconscious, which has the effect of making it *appear* that Fanon’s *jouissance* and gender align in the imposition of Gender. Fanon (and all Blacks) are trans(gender) in the (White) Human Unconscious. The Black is then *both* “transgendered and ungendered”⁷² in such a way that the

imposition of (trans)Gender reveals its (un)Gendering for, as Erik Hollis argues, Blackness and Gender are “two incommensurate positions, attempting to merge, a collision that results in incomplete halves making a fractured (w)hole.”⁷³ This (w)hole of Blackness and Gender which *appears as one* reveals the hole that is Blackness as absolute contradistinction to trans for it comprises a *jouissance* that is utterly singular and cannot be realized through anatomical changes, because this anatomical implantation is the way the Black is made to be (White). If the Black undergoes further anatomical changes this is because *it can never find enjoyment*, and merely seeks out the least constraining prison. Ultimately *jouissance* as Black flesh seeks to utterly negate not only the current object of its investment, but the body as *organization* itself, so as to free itself in an expenditure without reserve, as pure proprioceptive capacity.

Conclusion: Whither Racial Desire?

I had originally intended to write this article about “racial desire.” I found that I could not do this without addressing the fundamental antagonism between Blackness and Gender, so as to locate Gender as a position within the (White) Human Unconscious. I therefore pose my initial idea as an inquiry: If the Black is not Gender but seeks to destroy it, would it be possible for a “racial desire” to come into existence, which would determine desire by racial considerations alone? This “racial desire” cannot be a “racial fetishism” for the realm of fetishistic projection is that of “real fantasy” imposed by the (White) Human Unconscious in the experience of Gender as a bodily sedimentation. What we would normally describe as racial fetishism is in fact *gender fetishism* insofar as the White fixates Gender onto the racial Other. What the putative racial fetishist desires is in fact his own projection of Gender. Could there be a “racial desire” which takes only into account the desires, hatred, love, and anger that, for example, Blacks, Asian-Americans, Latin@s the Indigenous have for each other without reference to (White) Gender in a kind of “trans-racial primal scene”⁷⁴? Beyond a facile call for racial solidarity, I envision “racial desire” as something like a *tactic of the intimate* which *nevertheless or precisely because* of its emphasis on intimacy, love and sex takes as its task the end the World. How does such an enormous task result from such a putatively everyday affair? This is because “racial desire” is a call for a psychoanalytic structure which withdraws from the World. In other words, *another (racial) psychoanalysis is possible!*⁷⁵ The elaboration and realization of such a psychoanalysis would allow us rid ourselves of our White psyches and end the World. For these psyche-somas are *not ours*-they are mere adornments that we wear like hats and masks that we put on to pass in the World. Would not cultivating this alternative psychic formation be an “invention into existence?”⁷⁶

Endnotes

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1. I use third-person neutral pronouns to refer to the Black so as to be faithful to the academic literature which considers the Black to be a “fungible object” or a “thing.” See: Calvin Warren, *Ontological Terror: Blackness, Nihilism, and Emancipation*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2018; Frank B. Wilderson III *Red, White, & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms*. Durham Duke University Press, 2010.
2. The term “psyche-soma” was coined by D.W. Winnicott to denote the primacy of psychosomatic experience against mind-body dualism. See: D. W. Winnicott, “Mind and its Relation to the Psyche-Soma,” in *Through Paediatrics to Psych-Analysis: Collected Papers*, (Brunner/Mazel Publishers, 1992). For Winnicott, “the mind does not exist as an entity in the individual’s scheme of things provided the individual psyche-soma or body scheme has come satisfactorily through the very early developmental stages; mind is then no more than a special case of the functioning of the psyche-soma (244).” Perhaps paradoxically then, I use it here to indicate that the Black’s experience of Gender as “psyche-soma” is in fact a “false entity” or “false localization” (244), a dimension that Winnicott reserves for the putative localization of the mind.
3. Wilderson, *Red, White, & Black*, 38.
4. *Ibid.*, 23.
5. Jacques Lacan, “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience,” in *Ecrits*, trans. Bruce Fink with Héloïse Fink and Russell Grigg. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2006, 76.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book I: Freud’s Papers on Technique 1953-1954*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. John Forrester. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1988, 53.
8. As Orlando Patterson argues in *Slavery and Social Death*, manumission is not freedom but rather an extension of slavery. See: Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982, especially Chapter 8, “Manumission: Its Meaning and Modes.”
9. Guyora Binder quoted in Jared Sexton, “Preface: The Perfect Slave,” in *Black Masculinity and the Cinema of Policing*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, ix.
10. David Marriott, *Whither Fanon? Studies in the Blackness of Being*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018, 48.
11. Sexton, “Preface: The Perfect Slave,” x.
12. *Ibid.*, x.
13. Marriott, *Whither Fanon?*, 56.
14. *Ibid.*, 51.
15. Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*. New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2007, 6.
16. This identificatory aspect of *méconnaissance* is outlined by Lacan. According to Lacan, “Misrecognition (*méconnaissance*) is not ignorance. Misrecognition represents a certain organization of affirmations and negations, to which the subject is *attached*” (Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book I*, 167, my italics). The subject is thus attached to the very thing that prompts misrecognition.
17. As Jonathan M. Metzl admirably shows in his book *The Protest Psychosis: How Schizophrenia Became a Black Disease*, the constitution of psychosis or schizophrenia as pathological mental disorder became a condition associated with Blackness. I do not intend my use of Black Psychosis in this sense of pathology or mental illness, but rather as a heuristic device. See: Jonathan M. Metz, *The Protest Psychosis: How Schizophrenia Became a Black Disease*. New York: Beacon Press, 2010.
18. Marriott, *Whither Fanon?*, 15.

19. I consider Gender to constitutively be part of (White) Human ontology. I hope that this reasoning will come out in the process of my argument. I thus capitalize Gender to indicate its ontological dimension in antagonism with Blackness. However, among works that address this issue, in *Gender and the Abjection of Blackness*, Sabine Broeck establishes that Gender and Gender Theory have constituted themselves through a dispossession of the Black body. See: Sabine Broeck, *Gender and the Abjection of Blackness*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2018.
20. C. Riley Snorton, *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017, 76.
21. Ibid., 5.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid., 83.
24. Quoted in Ibid.
25. Ibid., 83.
26. This is how one should understand Spillers' conception of "un/gendering." See Hortense J. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," in *Black, White and in Color: Essays on American Literature and Culture*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003, 204: "In other words, in the historic outline of dominance, the respective subject-positions of 'female' and 'male' adhere to no symbolic integrity. At a time when current critical discourses appear to compel us more and more toward gender "undecidability," it would be reactionary, if not dumb, to insist on the integrity of female/male gender."
27. Calvin Warren, "Calling into Being: Tranifestation, Black Trans, and the Problem of Ontology," *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, vol. 4, no. 2, (May 2017): 268.
28. Ibid.
29. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann, New York: Grove Press, 1967, 83.
30. Warren, "Calling into Being" 267.
31. Ibid., 268.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid., 271.
34. Sigmund Freud, "Negation" in *General Psychological Theory: Papers on Metapsychology*, ed., Philip Rieff, trans. Joan Riviere. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991, 218.
35. Ibid., 217.
36. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 84.
37. Marriott, *Whither Fanon?*, 239.
38. On the notion of "separation" see Jared Sexton, "On Black Negativity, or the Affirmation of Nothing," *Society and Space*, 18 Sept. 2017, Retrieved from: <http://societyandspace.org/2017/09/18/on-black-negativity-or-the-affirmation-of-nothing/>. Sexton says, "This is not about a return to one's literal or figurative native land-mother, motherland, mother earth-except to learn how to lose that grounding, to see it dissolve or vanish and eventually to let it go and to rejoice in that separation. Why? Because separation, as psychoanalysis has shown powerfully, is a precondition for any relationship whatsoever."
39. See Freud, "Further Remarks on the Neuro-Psychoses of Defence," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud: Vol. 3 (1893-1899): Early Psychoanalytic Publications*, ed. and trans. James Strachey London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1962. According to Freud, when the defense fails it is characterized by a return of repressed memories. The compromise-formation is that of coming to terms with both "the repressed ideas and repressing ones."
40. For the Black, Gender as "natural given" and as "performative" are exactly the same, an imposition of the (White) Human Unconscious. See Part II, "Fanon's White Penis."
41. This is a Lacanian term. As Lacan argues "The subject is an apparatus. This apparatus is something lacunary, and it is in the lacuna that the subject establishes the function of a certain object, *qua* lost object. It is the status of the *objet a* in so far as it is present in the drive" (Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, ed., Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1998, 185). The *a* in *objet petit a* stands for Other or *Autre*, such that the *objet a* designates that piece of the Other around which the drive circles. This allows for a mediation which does not conflate the Subject either with the Other or the *objet a*. The

- constitution of Gender as *objet a* allows the Black to see Gender apropos of the (White) Human Unconscious as something distinct from it.
42. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 2006, 23.
 43. Spillers, "Mama's Baby," 206.
 44. I have elsewhere written about the Black Unconscious as a Generalized Unconscious. See Nicholas Eppert, "(Black) Non-Analysis: From the Restrained Unconscious to the Generalized Unconscious," *Labyrinth*, vol. 19, no. 2 (2017): 86-101.
 45. Here I abide by Spillers' distinction between the flesh and body in which the former designates a "liberated" subject position, while the latter designates a "captive" subject position.
 46. The Markmann translation reads "He is turned into a penis. He is a penis" (130) and the Philcox translation reads, "He has been turned into a penis. He is a penis" (147). Both the Markmann and Philcox translations render the French "*membre*" as penis, and add an article in front of "penis" in the second sentence to render it palatable in English. Additionally, the Philcox translation renders "*est faire*" into the past perfect rather than the present perfect.
 47. Frantz Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs*, Paris : Éditions du Seuil, 1952, 137.
 48. Incidentally *pénis* in French is feminine, taking a feminine article.
 49. Because "gendered anatomy" returns us to the domain of the anatomical, it requires a reinvestigation of various feminist critiques of Freud concerning the little girl's desire for the (anatomical) penis and the "castration complex" which have largely been dismissed in favor of the Lacanian emphasis on language and signification. What would it mean to move from the Symbolic "phallic function" to the Anatomical "*pénis* function"? For an overview of these debates, see: Juliet Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A Radical Reassessment of Freudian Psychoanalysis*. New York: Basic Books, 2000. And for a brilliant investigation into one such possible reconsideration of the anatomical in psychoanalysis and gender studies in relation to the "gut" and medication, see: Elizabeth A. Wilson, *Gut Feminism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2015.
 50. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 170.
 51. Marriott, "On Racial Fetishism," *Qui Parle: Critical Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol 18, No. 2, 226.
 52. Ibid.
 53. Ibid.
 54. For an articulation of the "phallic function," see Jacques Lacan's "The Signification of the Phallus," in *Écrits*.
 55. See: Claudine Razanjao and Jacques Postel, "La Vie et l'oeuvre psychiatrique de Frantz Fanon," *Sud/Nord* 22 (2007): 147-174.; Jean Khalfa, "Fanon, psychiatrie révolutionnaire," in Frantz Fanon, *Écrits sur l'aliénation et la liberté*, Reunis par Jean Khalfa et Robert Young. Paris: Éditions la Découverte, 2015..
 56. Frantz Fanon, "Altérations mentales, modifications caractérielles, troubles psychiques et déficit intellectuel dans l'héredo-dégénération spino-cérébelleuse. À propos d'un cas de maladie de Friedrich avec délire de possession," dans *Écrits sur l'aliénation et la liberté*, 192 (my translation).
 57. Ibid.
 58. Fanon, "Altérations mentales, modifications caractérielles, troubles psychiques et déficit intellectuel dans l'héredo-dégénération spino-cérébelleuse. À propos d'un cas de maladie de Friedrich avec délire de possession," 181.
 59. "Beside phylogeny and ontogeny stands sociogeny" (Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 4).
 60. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 84.
 61. In "Is the Phallus Uncut?: On the Role of Anatomy in Lacanian Subjectivization," *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, vol. 4, nos. 3-4 (2017): 497-517, Jordan Osserman argues that "psychoanalysis has traditionally allowed a 'too easy capitulation of the terms *feminine* and *masculine* to 'gendered' readings (510)" and makes the useful, though not unrelated, distinction between "desire (what you want) [as] different from identification (who you want to be, and be seen as (510)." I take this distinction from him.
 62. Patricia Gherovici, *Transgender Psychoanalysis: A Lacanian Perspective on Sexual Difference*. New York: Routledge, 2017, 104.
 63. Ibid., 104.
 64. *Jouissance* is again a Lacanian term. See: Jacques Lacan, *The Seminars of Jacques Lacan, Book XX: On Feminine Sexuality: The Limits of Love and Knowledge (1972-1973)*, trans. Bruce Fink. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1999.. Here Lacan articulated the problem of sexual difference in not in relation to

- anatomy, but “in terms of a tension between modalities of *jouissance*, phallic *jouissance*, and a hypothesized *jouissance* ‘beyond the phallus’ (or ‘non-all’)” (Osserman, “Is the Phallus Uncut?,” 509). As Osserman argues, referring to the work of Philippe van Haute and Tomas Geyskens “Less remarked on is the fact that, with this latter theorization, one is no longer in a position to diagnose a subject as ‘truly’ masculine or feminine, for the “formulas of sexuation’ does not determine two kinds of subjects, but they express a field of tension in which each subject moves” (Ibid.).
65. For a survey of the literature on transgender and psychoanalysis, see: Sheila L. Cavanagh “Transpsychoanalytics,” *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, vol. 4, no. 3-4 (2017): 326-357.
66. Eric Laurent, “Gender and *Jouissance*,” trans. Ilya Merlin and Raphaëlle Desvignes, Retrieved from the Academia.edu page of Ilya Merlin, 20 Aug. 2018, https://www.academia.edu/31960130/Gender_and_Jouissance_Eric_Laurent.
67. Osserman, “Is the Phallus Uncut?,” 510.
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid., 509.
70. See Part 1, Section III of this paper.
71. Erik Hollis, “Figuring the *Angry Inch*: Transnormativity, the black femme and the fraudulent phallus; or fleshly remainders of the ‘ungendered’ and the ‘unthought’” *Feminist Theory*, vol. 19, no. 1 (2008): 27-28.
72. Ibid., 36.
73. Ibid., 28.
74. For an elaboration of this concept see Nicholas Eppert, “Asian-Americans in Affirmative Action: A Genealogy of the Trans*racial Family Romance,” Masters Thesis, May 25, 2018, NYU: Media Communication and Culture Department.
75. Here I use “racial psychoanalysis” as a heuristic device for something that has yet to be created or elaborated. Thus while “racial” designates the relations between Blacks, the Indigenous, Asian-Americans and Latin@s, I realize that the term “race” or “racial” as a putatively “unifying gesture” presents its own problems. For example, as Audra Simpson argues in *Mohawk Interruptus*, “Race and sex become meaningful categories of determining membership in the consciousness of Kahnawa’kehró:non when resources were threatened and Mohawks become ‘Indians’” (Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014, 60). Here “race” becomes an effect of blood quantum requirements and so the very category of “race” becomes a Settler Colonial imposition upon Indigenous peoples. A “racial psychoanalysis” must take into account the simultaneous logics of Anti-Blackness, Settler Colonialism, Orientalism and Immigration and Border logics.
76. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 179.